CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER
Cleveland, Ohio
March 29, 1960

SCIENCE IN NEWS—

# 'Bald' Spots in Lungs May Lure Cancer

By ALTON BLAKESLEE

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)—Killed in action in a single day: 500,000 sweeper cells in your lungs.

This can happen in an acute lung infection. Influenza and chronic infections including bronchitis could lead to staggering losses of these sweeper, hair-like cells or cilia which cleanse the breathing tubes of the lungs.

Whole "islands" of missing cells could provide barren places where cigarette tars, chemicals from polluted air, or other agents could collect and open the gate to lung cancers, a medical researcher said yesterday.

Prevention or control of chronic lung infections thus could be a good defense against lung cancer, Dr. George N. Papanicolaou of Cornell University Medical College told an American Cancer Society seminar for science writers. In his absence, his report was read by Dr. Cynthia Pierce of the Rockefeller Institute.

### Asian Flu Kills Cilia

Great losses of cilia cells have been found in some victims of Asian flu in 1957, he said. The great flu epidemic and pneumonias of 1918-20 possibly could have influenced later lung cancers, Dr. Papanicolaou added.

Eleven out of 24 aromatic hydrocarbons in cigarette tars have been found to cause cancer when applied to laboratory animals, said Dr. Benjamin van Duuren of New York University Bellevue Medical Center.

They are not present in tobacco itself, but are formed in the burning of the cigarette.

All 11 combined are not sufficient in amounts to account for lung cancer, and other cancer-causing chemicals "must be present in cigarette tars," he said.

Tars from cigars and pipes contain even larger amounts of these chemicals, but such smokers may inhale less, or not at all, compared with cigarette smokers, Dr. van Duuren said.

Filter cigarettes give lower amounts of tar per cigarette, but "do not accomplish selective removal of carcinogenic (cancer-causing) compounds."

Studies are underway for additives which might reduce these chemicals, and agents which would lower the burning temperature of the tobacco so fewer of the chemicals would be formed, he added.

## Cigarette Firms Accused of Dodging the Facts

Dr. Alton Ochsner of New Orleans said he thinks the tobacco industry is "guilty of denying facts because of financial gain" in the cigarette-lung cancer controversy.

The surgeon long has held cigarettes to be a direct cause of lung cancer.

"In spite of the overwhelming evidence of the causal relationship of cigarette smoking and cancer, the tobacco industry has refused to admit the evidence, and has tried to confuse the issue by blaming other possible factors, such as air pollution," Dr. Ochsner told the science writers.

"It seems to us that they would be on much firmer ground if they would admit that there is a calculated risk in smoking . . . and inform the public of this risk so that the responsibility of smoking is entirely the individual's."

### Industry's Reply

The calculated risk "is not great because it requires a relatively long period of time, 20 years or more, for the condition to develop, although there is tremendous variation in one's susceptibility to cancer," Dr. Ochsner said.

In New York, the Tobacco Industry Research Committee said in a statement:

"Our position is and has been that much more knowledge about cancer and especially lung cancer is necessary before positive conclusions about the cause or causes can be established. This position is shared by outstanding scientists here and abroad.

In keeping with our position, we do not believe it is fair to the general public or those connected with the tobacco industry—from grower to retailer—to permit extreme and untrue charges to go unchallenged. Many doctors and scientists simply do not agree that the lung cancer question has been settled."

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DURHAM MORNING HERALD
Durham, North Carolina
March 29, 1960

# Leaf Spokesman Says Lung Cancer Study Incomplete

NEW YORK (UPI) — The Tobacco Industry Research Committee said Monday no "positive conclusions" could be drawn on the cause of lung cancer without more research to get needed facts and evidence.

Committee Chairman Timoty V. Hartnett issued the statement in response to reports presented at an American Cancer Society seminar on cancer research at Louisville, Ky.

Dr. Alton Ochsner, New Orleans surgeon who was one of the first scientists to report a belief smoking and lung cancer were related, told the seminar he still believed only a decrease in cigarette smoking would bring about a decrease in lung cancer.

Hartnett said "outstanding scientists here and abroad" shared the opinion that more research was necessary before a definite link could be proved.

"We do not think the present campaign of repeating the anti-smoking theories of the extremists will ever constitute proof of the charges they make against smoking," Hartnett said.

He quoted a recent editorial of the Journal of the American Medical Assn. as saying "that there is not 'sufficient evidence to warrant the assumption of an all-or-none authoritative position' in regard to the smoking theory."

THE EVENING STAR
Washington, D.C.
March 30, 1960

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# Tobacco Charges Hit by Institute

The Tobacco Institute, Inc., with headquarters here, today challenged reports coming from the American Cancer Society seminar in Louisville, Ky.

Edward F. Ragland, vice president of the institute, referring to statements linking lung cancer to smoking, declared, "These same men have been speculating about their theories of cigarette smoking for a number of years and we see nothing new in what they say today except more guesswork and opinion."

Mr. Ragland asserted the group continues "to insist that their ideas are right, even when a great deal of other scientific evidence and opinion doesn't back it up."

"As for talk about 'a 'safe' cigarette, this is not new from them either," he added. "But what is new is the admission by scientists at this same conference that they don't know of any compounds present in tobacco smoke in sufficient amounts to account for human lung cancer."

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Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/tfcm0000